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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Identical letters dated 25 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward herewith a letter dated 25 November 1998 from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan addressed to you (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 45, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) A. G. Ravan FARHÂDI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 25 November 1998 from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan addressed to the Secretary-General

As it is of the knowledge of Your Excellency, the Taliban mercenaries, back in October 1998 announced that they would ban, unilaterally, the use of land mines by their fighters across the territories they control in Afghanistan.

Sharply against this disseminating background and only days after the announcement, the Taliban are intensely engaged in planting huge quantities of mines in an effort to fortify their positions along many front lines in northern Afghanistan.

The contradictory announcement, similar to scores of commitments yet unilaterally breached by the Taliban, among them their commitment to implement a memorandum of understanding signed with the United Nations, a mutual accord with the Islamic State of Afghanistan over a swap of prisoners, brokered by a Saudi-based Afghan businessman, and thereby a declared ceasefire with the government forces, exemplifies a typical hypocritical attitude maintained by the Taliban.

Although there has been no single instance upon which the Taliban militia have honoured and stood by their words, reports on the massive use of land mines by the Taliban this time, happen to unfold a too-broad contradiction by their announcement in a too little time.

The latest drastic increase in the use of land mines by the Taliban, has been widely covered by the international news media such as the corroborating report by the Pakistani daily, Frontier Post, 18 November 1998 hereinto.

> "Since their autumn offensive on October 10, 1998, the Taliban militia have heavily mined the 10-kilometre strip between the districts of Nijrâb and Tagâb in Kapisa province, about 85-km north of Afghan capital, Kabul and one Western analyst estimated that any attempt to cross the zone could result in 30 percent to 50 percent casualties."

Clearly, the motive behind the false announcement is not only to cover up the increased perpetuation in recent past of crimes against humanity and war crimes by the Taliban militia in northern Afghanistan, but is also a demagogic move aimed at misleading the international community in its assessment of the situation in Afghanistan.